

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
March 5 - April 11, 2012

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1. [Rice: International Community Faces "Moment of Truth" on Syria \(04-10-2012\)](#)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — According to U.N.–Arab League Special Envoy Kofi Annan’s peace plan, which Syria’s Bashar al-Assad agreed to on March 27, Syrian forces were to have completed their withdrawal from populated areas of the country by April 10 in preparation for a two-day cease-fire with the Syrian opposition.

However, U.S. Special Representative to the U.N. Susan Rice said April 10 that the Assad regime is failing to live up to its pledges, and the U.N. Security Council may be facing a “moment of truth” on whether to increase pressure on Syrian authorities or risk seeing the country devolve into a civil war, with consequences for the region as well as the Syrian people.

Speaking in New York after a Security Council discussion on Syria, Rice said, "Should the Syrian government yet again refuse to implement its commitments, make promises and then break them and continue and escalate the killing, then I think it will be clear to all that there isn't yet prospect for a diplomatic solution."

The Obama administration believes that “we face, very soon, a moment of truth, where if in fact the government continues to fail to fulfill its obligations, which it gives every indication it will continue to do, the international community and this Council ... will have to determine whether they remain unified” in support of Annan’s plan and will “take the logical next step” of increasing pressure on the Assad regime “through collective action,” she said.

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If it fails to do so, Rice said, “it looks quite obvious that what is increasingly becoming a violent crisis will potentially devolve quite regrettably into full-scale civil war with all of the consequences that that entails for the people of Syria, for neighboring countries, and the wider international community.”

Annan sent a letter to the Council April 10 in which he asked the body to “register its deep concern” at the failure of Syrian authorities to meet their commitments.

Despite their assurances to the contrary, “credible reports indicate that ... Syrian armed forces have conducted rolling military operations in population centers, characterized by troop movements into towns supported by artillery fire,” Annan said, adding that in recent days Syrian noncompliance with their commitments under the peace plan “has become clear.”

“While some troops and heavy weapons have been withdrawn from some localities, this appears to be often limited to a repositioning of heavy weapons that keeps cities within firing range,” Annan said.

Rice’s and Annan’s comments came one day after Syrian forces attacked refugees who had fled the violence into neighboring Turkey. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters April 9 that Turkish authorities told their counterparts in the Obama administration that the Syrians’ actions “were firings on innocents. These were not in response to any kind of fire.”

About 24,000 Syrian refugees live in Turkey. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced April 1 that the United States is increasing its humanitarian assistance for Syrians to \$25 million, including food rations and support for Syrian refugees and their hosts.

“We join the Turkish government in calling for the Syrian regime to immediately cease fire. And these incidents are just another indication that the Assad regime does not seem at all willing to meet the commitments that it made to Kofi Annan. Not only has the violence not abated, it has been worse in recent days,” Nuland said.

Nuland said that ultimately Assad will be forced out of power.

“The question is when and the question is how many of his supporters, how many of his military are going to continue to execute his orders right up until the end and face the justice that is coming to them as well,” she said, adding that the United States “will keep squeezing and isolating this guy until the violence ends.”

[Ambassador Rice on Syria, Somalia](#) (04-05-2012)

2. Panetta Meets Afghan Defense, Interior Ministers at Pentagon (04-10-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 10, 2012 – The goal of a sovereign, secure Afghanistan is in sight, Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak said here today at the beginning of the Afghanistan Security Consultation Forum.

Wardak and Afghan Interior Minister Bismullah Muhammadi Khan held a two-hour meeting in Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta's Pentagon office. They discussed the status of Afghan forces, plans for training those forces and issues that will be discussed at the NATO summit in Chicago next month.

Panetta congratulated both Afghan leaders for the progress the military and police are making. "I have often stated that I believe 2011 was a turning point, that we suddenly were able to see that the Afghan army and police developed the capabilities to provide security and have developed capabilities to implement the kind of operations that are necessary to providing security," he said.

Strong Afghan military and police forces are needed to make the transition to local security lead, he said.

The secretary also spoke about the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Afghanistan on special operations signed April 8. "The fact that we were able to achieve an agreement, I think, was a very important step forward to ensure that we will make the transition to Afghan operations, but we will do it in a responsible and effective way," Panetta said. "I thank both of you for the leadership that you've provided in being able to achieve those very important agreements."

The forum looked at the future of the Afghan national security forces, the levels that they will surge to and the levels the nation will need for the long run, Panetta said.

"I look forward to discussing our strategic partnership and our ability to arrive at a strategic partnership agreement, which will again be another important step forward in our relationship, and also the regional security challenges that we will have to continue to confront in order to ultimately have a sovereign Afghanistan that can in fact be secure and govern itself," he said.

Wardak thanked the United States for its "sterling contribution" to Afghanistan. "And we are not an ungrateful nation," he said. "We fully recognize your generosity. We acknowledge and honor your sacrifices. We pay tribute to all those brave souls that have paid the ultimate price for the mission in Afghanistan, and we pray for the families of the fallen and wounded."

Afghanistan is at a critical juncture, Wardak said. "But after the years of struggle, tomorrow's goal is in sight," he said. "The costs have been high and the stakes even higher, but the good news is that the hope has been replaced by the real progress, though it has been dearly bought."

Continued U.S. support and cooperation will remain vital for the Afghan forces to transition to the security lead in the years ahead, he said.

"No one should have any doubt on our firm determination to succeed," the defense minister said. "It's a question of our national survival. And we do not wish to be a burden on the U.S. or the rest of the international community more than it is required."

"We assure you that we will spare no effort and sacrifices to ensure the inevitability of our victory in this joint endeavor," Wardak said.

The interior minister also expressed his gratitude for "all of the sacrifices, lost lives and treasures of this country that have been sacrificed for our mutual goals for the survival of our nation in Afghanistan."

In the past decade, coalition and Afghan forces have had many successes and many accomplishments, Muhammadi said through a translator. “We have seen many victories in southern Afghanistan, in eastern Afghanistan, in all of Afghanistan,” he said, adding that the visit comes during “a time of destiny” as Afghanistan goes through a transitional process.

By this time next year, the transition process shifting responsibility from the coalition to Afghan security forces will be well under way, Muhammadi said. “I am certain that these face-to-face meetings that we have in this framework of the security consultation forum will pave the way for a successful conference in Chicago,” he said.

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

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[3. DOD Expands International Cyber Cooperation, Official Says \(04-10-2012\)](#)

By Cheryl Pellerin

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 10, 2012 – The Defense Department is moving beyond its traditional treaty allies to expand partnerships in cyberspace, a senior defense office said today.

Steven Schleien, DOD’s principal director for cyber policy, said DOD officials are working toward long-term goals of collective cyber self-defense and deterrence.

Schleien spoke at Georgetown University’s second annual International Engagement on Cyber here where experts from Washington, the Netherlands and Russia spoke about national security and diplomatic efforts in cyberspace before several hundred students and experts in the field.

“We started with our traditional treaty allies, those with whom we have commitments,” Schleien said.

The department started there in accordance with President Barack Obama’s international cyberspace strategy, released in May 2011, which says that “hostile acts in cyberspace could compel actions under our mutual defense treaties,” he said.

Defense officials worked with DOD allies and NATO staff during the 2010 Lisbon Summit, Schleien said, to bring all NATO networks, civilian and military, under the NATO Cyber Incident Response Center, which is expected to be complete later this year.

Most recently, he said, DOD officials are starting to talk with the Japanese, South Korean and New Zealand defense ministries about cyber security, while working closely with the British and Australian ministries “to talk about a whole spectrum of cyber interoperability.”

Cyberspace is a novel arena for defense partnerships, said Schleien, a former arms control official. “In our view ..., arms control doesn’t work in cyberspace,” he said. “... I don’t know what we would monitor, or how we would verify anything in terms of cyber weapons or cyber tools -- an issue my Russian defense colleagues have raised.”

Internationally, though, “we do believe that we need to establish norms of international behavior for cyberspace,” he added.

“The law of armed conflict comes to mind as one that’s essential to DOD,” Schleien said, “because in our view, it applies to cyberspace as it does to the other operational domains.”

U.S. Cyber Command finds it necessary to share information with other countries, but harder to accomplish given its national security mission, Navy Rear Adm. Samuel Cox, Cybercom’s director of intelligence, said at the forum.

Cybercom Commander Army Gen. Keith B. Alexander also is the director of the National Security Agency, which Cox called a unique Defense Department and national intelligence collection organization responsible for exploiting potentially adversarial foreign networks for intelligence purposes, within the cyber realm.

“From our perspective, what we’re looking at is a global cyber arms race that is not proceeding as a leisurely or even linear fashion but is, in fact, accelerating,” he said.

The increasingly vertical nature of the threat, Cox added, “is what is motivating my boss and others for a particular sense of urgency in being able to move forward on this.”

It’s relatively easy to engage with longstanding international partners like the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as Canada and New Zealand, he said.

Beyond those nations, Cox said, “it gets significantly harder.”

One of the impediments is the high-level classification of the information, which has “very strict rules on how you can share this with foreign governments,” he said.

The bottom line is that military cooperation with foreign countries in cyberspace “is still an extremely difficult environment to try to navigate through,” Cox said.

But because cyber defense is a global problem, the admiral added, “if we don’t work together with many of those key allies, then we will not be able to make a significant improvement in the current threat environment.”

In the United States, Obama’s issuance of international cyber strategy was a landmark event in raising critical awareness of the cyber security issue, Christopher Painter, the State Department’s coordinator for cyber issues, told the audience.

“The threat certainly has become more acute,” he added, but the issue has evolved from a narrow, technical issue to “a national security issue and a foreign policy issue -- and a foreign policy priority.”

A growing number of countries have released national cyber security strategies and “organized their government around this issue,” Painter said.

When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced Obama’s international strategy, he added, she characterized the range of cyber-related issues as constituting “a new foreign policy imperative.”

Painter added, “I think that is important because it raises the level of dialogue to something that those people who often didn’t play in this sandbox before -- foreign ministries at the heads-of-government level -- are now dealing with.”

What the United States is doing domestically feeds into what the nation is doing internationally, he said.

“I think it’s very important to do as much as we can to prevent and mitigate the threat at home, Painter said, “but we can only get so far acting unilaterally. We have to act in concert ... with countries around the world to address this problem.”

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[Special Report: Cyber Strategy](#)

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[DOD, Partners Better Prepared for Cyber Attacks](#)

4. U.S. Wants “Deeds Not Words” from Syria to End Violence (04-05-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Despite the Syrian government’s public acceptance of U.N.–Arab League envoy Kofi Annan’s proposal for a cease-fire, its violent attacks against Syrians have intensified and the Obama administration remains unconvinced that Bashar al-Assad’s regime is complying with the cease-fire deadline, set for April 10.

Speaking April 5 in New York, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice told reporters that the previous day had been “one of the more violent days of late” as Assad’s security forces appeared to intensify their artillery bombardments of major Syrian population centers such as Homs and Idlib.

According to the human rights group Amnesty International, 232 Syrians have been killed in the week since the Assad regime publicly accepted Annan’s peace plan March 27. The United Nations estimates that more than 9,000 have died since Syrians began protesting the Assad regime and demanding political and human rights reforms in March 2011.

A Turkish official told the Reuters News Agency April 5 that up to 900 more people had fled to Turkey from Syria on April 4, bringing the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey to almost 21,000.

Rice said U.S. officials "have heard statements by the Syrian government that they intend to begin to take steps to meet their obligations under their agreement with the joint special envoy," but she said the Obama administration "will be looking at actions and deeds rather than their words."

State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters April 5 that the United States still has not seen press reports or heard from activists on the ground that Syrian forces are carrying out any troop withdrawals from civilian-populated city centers.

"It is clear that the Assad regime appears to be using this window to continue to carry out its horrible assault on the Syrian people, and in the event ... that he does not comply by April 10, then we're going to be consulting with the U.N. Security Council on next steps," Toner said.

Annan's plan sets a deadline of April 10 for withdrawing troops and heavy weaponry from populated areas, to be followed within 48 hours by a halt to the fighting by both government forces and the Syrian opposition. It also calls for the government to allow access for humanitarian organizations and for the release of political detainees. Following the 48-hour cease-fire, the plan calls on all sides in the conflict to hold talks on a political solution.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told an informal meeting of the U.N. General Assembly April 5 that the situation on the ground in Syria "continues to deteriorate," with continued violence and assaults by Syrian forces in civilian areas.

"It is the responsibility now of the Syrian authorities to deliver on what they have promised, and to implement, fully and unconditionally, all the commitments they have given to Joint Special Envoy Annan," Ban said.

On April 5, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a presidential statement that endorsed the April 10 deadline for a cease-fire and warned the Assad regime of "further steps" should it fail to meet it.

In the statement the council calls upon Syrian authorities "to implement urgently and visibly its commitments ... to a) cease troop movements toward population centers, b) cease all use of heavy weapons in such centers, and c) begin pull back of military concentrations in and around population centers," and to "fulfill these in their entirety by no later than 10 April 2012."

5. U.N. Security Council Presidential Statement on Syria (04-05-2012)

The Security Council recalls its Presidential Statements of 3 August 2011 and 21 March 2012 and its Press Statement of 1 March 2012.

The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Syria, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the 2 April 2012 briefing of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Kofi Annan. The Security Council

notes that the Syrian government committed on 25 March 2012 to implement the Envoy's six-point proposal.

The Security Council calls upon the Syrian government to implement urgently and visibly its commitments, as it agreed to do in its communication to the Envoy of 1 April, to (a) cease troop movements towards population centres, (b) cease all use of heavy weapons in such centres, and (c) begin pullback of military concentrations in and around population centres, and to fulfil these in their entirety by no later than 10 April 2012.

The Security Council calls upon all parties, including the opposition, to cease armed violence in all its forms within 48 hours of the implementation in their entirety by the Syrian government of measures (a), (b), (c) above. The Security Council further calls upon the opposition to engage with the Envoy in this regard.

The Security Council reiterates its call for the Syrian authorities to allow immediate, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations in need of assistance, in accordance with international law and guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. The Security Council calls upon all parties in Syria, in particular the Syrian authorities, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and relevant humanitarian organizations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance. To this end, the Security Council calls on all parties to immediately implement a daily two hour humanitarian pause as called for in the Envoy's six-point proposal.

The Security Council underscores the importance of an effective and credible United Nations supervision mechanism in Syria to monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and relevant aspects of the Envoy's six-point proposal. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to provide proposals for such a mechanism as soon as appropriate, after consultations with the government of Syria. The Security Council stands ready to consider these proposals and to authorise an effective and impartial supervision mechanism upon implementation of a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties.

The Security Council underscores the central importance of a peaceful political settlement to the Syrian crisis and reiterates its call for the urgent, comprehensive, and immediate implementation of all aspects of the Envoy's six-point proposal. The Security Council reiterates its full support for the Envoy's six-point proposal aimed at bringing an immediate end to all violence and human rights violations, securing humanitarian access and facilitating a Syrian-led political transition leading to a democratic, plural political system, in which citizens are equal regardless of their affiliations, ethnicities or beliefs, including through commencing a comprehensive political dialogue between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the Syrian opposition.

The Security Council requests the Envoy to update the Council on the cessation of violence in accordance with the above timeline, and progress towards implementation of his six-point proposal in its entirety. In the light of these reports, the Security Council will consider further steps as appropriate.

6. U.S. Envoy at U.N. Disarmament Commission 2012 Session (04-05-2012)

U.S. Mission to the United Nations

Statement by Mr. John A. Bravaco, U.S. Representative, United Nations Disarmament Commission 2012 Session, New York, NY, April 4, 2012

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. Good afternoon everyone.

On behalf of the United States Delegation, let me congratulate Peru on its election to the Chairmanship of the 2012 session of the UN Disarmament Commission. It is my great pleasure to be working with you again, sir. You may count on the full support of the United States as you fulfill your important responsibilities.

We also congratulate the other members of the Commission's Bureau for their elections. And we warmly welcome the new High Representative for Disarmament, Ms. Angela Kane, and express our gratitude for the contributions of the previous High Representative, Sergio Duarte.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Disarmament Commission is meeting on the eve of the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (NPT). Please allow me to touch on some of the activities, achievements, and commitments of the United States in the field of arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament.

The NPT is the Cornerstone

Mr. Chairman, in the forty-two years since the NPT entered into force it has become the most widely adhered to nonproliferation and disarmament agreement the world has ever known. As U.S. President Barack Obama said on April 5, 2009 in Prague: "The basic bargain is sound: Countries with nuclear weapons will move towards disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, and all countries can access peaceful nuclear energy." Working together at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, States Party achieved agreement on an ambitious and forward-looking Action Plan across all three pillars of the NPT. As the 2015 Review Process begins, the United States looks forward to working with its NPT partners to strengthen implementation of all aspects of the Treaty and the international nuclear nonproliferation regime.

New START and Beyond

Two agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation that came into force last year serve as essential evidence of the United States' commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. The U.S.-Russia Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement will result in the disposal of enough weapons-grade plutonium for many thousands of nuclear weapons. And the New START Treaty, the implementation of which is now well underway, will, we anticipate, set the stage for the pursuit of a future agreement with Russia for broad reductions in all categories of nuclear weapons – strategic, non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. As we consider next steps, close consultations with Russia, as well as our allies, will remain essential.

P5 Transparency and Confidence Building on Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Chairman, Action 5 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document Action Plan calls on the Nuclear Weapons States to engage on further reducing nuclear weapons and diminishing their role, reducing the risk of nuclear war, and enhancing transparency and mutual confidence. Building on the NPT RevCon and the engagement initiated at the 2009 London and 2011 Paris conferences, the P5 have continued discussions on these and other nonproliferation and disarmament issues, including reporting by the P5 to other NPT Parties on disarmament-related matters. This process continues. The United Kingdom hosted just today a P5 verification working group, as agreed at last year's Paris P5 Conference. And this summer, the United States is pleased to be hosting the next P5 verification, transparency, and confidence building conference in Washington, DC.

Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty

Mr. Chairman, a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) remains an absolutely essential step on the path to global nuclear disarmament, one repeatedly endorsed by the international community. The reality of the situation is simply this: the longer an effectively verifiable FMCT is delayed, or more accurately, denied, the longer a world free of nuclear weapons will remain out of reach.

For this reason, we regret that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) did not agree to the recent compromise Program of Work that would have advanced efforts toward an FMCT, along with serious work on other important issues. We are disappointed at this lost opportunity, but appreciate the vigorous efforts of Egypt and the other “P-6” CD Presidency countries to move this issue forward. We are currently consulting with our P5 partners and others on the most appropriate next steps for an FMCT.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

The United States also remains committed to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as another critical element of the nuclear disarmament process. The Administration is continuing its engagement with the United States Senate and the American public on the merits of the Treaty. As we move forward with our efforts to promote ratification, we call on all governments to declare or reaffirm their commitments not to conduct nuclear explosive tests. We thank and congratulate Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, and Indonesia for their recent ratifications of the Treaty. And we ask all the remaining States required for the Treaty’s entry into force to join us in moving toward ratification.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Mr. Chairman, over the last several years, the United States has reinvigorated its efforts to support nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties as an important part of the multilateral arms control and nonproliferation architecture. On May 2, 2011, the Administration transmitted the relevant Protocols of the African and South Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaties to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. Also last year, the Nuclear Weapon States and the states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations resolved long standing differences related to the South East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone’s Protocol language. Upon completion of some procedural steps, we hope to be able to sign the Protocol to the Southeast Asian zone treaty this year. Regarding the Treaty of Semipalatinsk in Central Asia, we have had preliminary discussions with Kazakhstan and our P5 partners to consider ways to address outstanding issues. And, along with the other NPT depositary states, we strongly support the efforts of Finnish Under Secretary Jaako Laajava, the facilitator for the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone Conference.

Outer Space

Mr. Chairman in an effort to strengthen the long-term sustainability, stability, safety, and security of space, the United States earlier this year announced its decision to formally work with the European Union and spacefaring nations to develop and advance an “International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities.” The European Union’s draft Code of Conduct is a good foundation for the development of a non-legally binding International Code of Conduct, which, if adopted, would establish guidelines for responsible behavior to reduce the hazards of debris-generating events and increase the transparency of operations in space to avoid the danger of collisions. We also look

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forward to practical work in the UN's Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures that is scheduled to begin this summer.

The UNDC'S Agenda

Mr. Chairman, as we work to finalize agreement on the Commission's agenda for the 2012-2014 issue cycle, please allow me to express my confidence in your ability to foster a compromise that takes account of the views of all delegations.

Conclusion

Once our agenda is agreed, the United States looks forward to addressing the issues before the Commission in the coming years, and will do its part to facilitate a positive outcome.

Mr. Chairman, this statement will be made available on the website of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention.
